

# Assessment Procedures

Consortium	Lakes Area Adult Education
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Policy guidance	From <a href="http://www.mnabe.org/abe-law-policy/mn-abe-policies">Minnesota ABE Policies website</a> ( <a href="http://www.mnabe.org/abe-law-policy/mn-abe-policies">www.mnabe.org/abe-law-policy/mn-abe-policies</a> ): <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Assessment Policy</li></ul>

## Introduction

These procedures detail the local ABE consortium's testing procedures used at all sites. These procedures describe how the consortium is complying with the Minnesota ABE Assessment Policy through outlining:

- Lakes Area Adult Education's use of **approved assessments** (CASAS and/or TABE) and for which students each are used.
- Consortium use of different modes of testing, including paper-based testing, computer-based testing, and remote testing.
- When and how to conduct **pre-testing** to ensure all students have a valid pre-test within the first 12 contact hours; including how to ensure that the student does not already have a valid pre-test, and how the program handles invalid test results.
- When and how to conduct **post-testing**, including how to ensure that the student is not post-tested before 40 contact hours, how the post-tests are administered, how the program handles invalid test forms and scores, how post-testing data is entered into SiD, and how the consortium works to maintain a 60% or greater post-testing rate for all participants within the program year.
- What the **assessment training requirements** are for initial testing certification, re-certification at least every five years, other ongoing training, and for which staff members.
- What **additional guidance** and procedures the ABE consortium has for local staff regarding testing and assessment.

## Assessments Used By the Consortium and For Which Students

Describe the consortium use of approved assessments (CASAS, TABE and/or BEST Plus) and for which students they are used. Explain consortium use of different modes of testing, including paper-based testing, computer-based testing, and remote testing.

Lakes Area Adult Education (LAAE) utilizes assessments to help instructors identify the skills students have, the gaps in skills that they need to improve, and which classes are most appropriate for each student. LAAE staff in all capacities (administrative, instructional and support) are trained to administer each of these assessments. LAAE uses two of the three assessments that have been approved by the Minnesota Department of Education:

- CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System) STEPS Series Assessments for students who are coming to school with the goal to improve their English language skills and literacy. These assessments are used for ESL Levels 1-6 at intake and for post-testing at the ESL Level. We currently use the paper/pencil test versions.

### CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System)

For Levels: **ESL 1-6**

<i>Name/Series &amp; Usage Dates</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Format</i>	<i>Forms/Levels</i>	<i>Testing Protocols</i>
<b>Listening STEPS</b> Now–July 13, 2030	Listening	Computer-Based	621L-630L	<b>If a student scores 153-220, enter the score and begin ESL instruction.</b>  <b>If a student scores 221 or higher, do not enter the score. Retest using TABE 11/12 Series and move the student to the ABE track.</b>
<b>Reading STEPS</b> Now–July 13, 2030	Reading	Paper-Based	621R-630R	

- TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) 11/12 Series are used for students who are at ABE Levels 1-6 at intake and for post testing for the ABE Level. We currently use the paper/pencil test versions.

### TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education)

For Levels: **ABE 1-6**

<i>Name/Series &amp; Usage Dates</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Modes/s In Use</i>	<i>Forms/Levels</i>	<i>Testing Protocols</i>
<b>11 and 12</b> Now–June 30, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• Math</li> <li>• Language</li> </ul>	Paper-Based	L (Literacy) E (Easy) M (Medium) D (Difficult) A (Advanced)	<b>It is <i>best practice</i> to assess a learner in 2 subjects. Whenever possible, administer a combination of Reading, Math and Language in TABE 11/12:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reading and Language</b> if they are focusing on <u>Reading</u> skills</li> <li>• <b>Reading/Language and Math</b> if they are also focusing on <u>Math</u> skills</li> </ul> <b>All three subject areas <i>may be</i> administered.</b>

## **Other Assessments Used by Lakes Area Adult Education**

- LAAE utilizes GED Ready Assessments with our GED Students. We purchase and assign codes in our GED Manager Account. We give these to GED students who want to see how close they are to passing the official GED Tests. We use the scores and “Skills Needed to Improve the Score” to help create individualized learning plans for GED students. We use the Common Core Achieve and Kaplan GED Prep Books to create class lessons, as well as individualized student assignments.
- LAAE also uses Northstar Digital Literacy assessments to identify students in need of digital literacy instruction. All students enrolled with LAAE are eligible for a Northstar Digital Literacy account. Students can pass assessments in Northstar to earn certificates demonstrating competency in a variety of digital literacy skills.

## **Pre-Test Procedures and Guidelines**

**Explain when and how to conduct pre-testing to ensure all students have a valid pre-test within the first 12 contact hours, including how to ensure that the student does not already have a valid pre-test, and how the program handles invalid test results.**

All students who enroll in ABE are initially assessed during the first 12 hours of instruction. Data from these assessments is used to place learners at appropriate levels of instruction, to diagnose learner strengths and weaknesses, and to set educational goals.

Both TABE and CASAS test administration manuals include specific recommendations about which level of pre-test to administer based on the appraisal and/or locator test score. Placement or locator tests are administered whenever feasible. These scores are not used to set EFL's, but to determine which pre-test to administer.

Pre-tests are administered as soon as possible once a student enrolls in the ABE program. Testing is always conducted during the first 12 hours of instruction. Students are first given an appraisal or locator test, and the scores are used to consult suggested “next test” charts provided by TABE and CASAS to guide pre-test selection. As a safeguard to ensure that all students are pre-tested within the first 12 hours of instruction, the SID database prevents a teacher from entering contact hours for the learner (beyond 11.75) until the pre-test has been administered and a valid assessment score has been entered.

All tests are administered under a proctored environment in an area (or modality) that will be the focus of instruction, Reading, Math, Language, Listening or some combination thereof. If a student has been assessed in more than one area, e.g. reading and math, the score for the area that corresponds to the lowest Educational Functioning Level is used to set the student's entry Educational Functioning Level, and progress will be determined by post-testing in that same testing area or modality.

Upon completion of the pretest/s, the scores are tabulated and valid test scores (as outlined in the test administration manuals) are recorded and reported in the SID database as Standard Scores. Invalid scores require retesting in an alternate form of the test that will provide an accurate and valid score. Scores that fall

below the valid range require the student to re-test in an alternate, easier version of the test. Scores that go above the valid range require the student to re-test in an alternate, more difficult version of the test.

In some cases, a student may achieve a pre-testing score that is well below the valid range on the easiest possible version of a test. In this case, when there is no alternate or lower version of the test available, the lowest valid score for that pre-test will be entered as the student's Educational Functioning Level. This is an example of a situation with New American and refugee learners who speak little to no English and cannot answer any of the questions on the CASAS Form 27 (Beginning Literacy) test. Rather than assigning them a zero "0" score, or leaving the score blank, they are assigned a score of 153, the lowest possible valid score in the range for the CASAS Form 27 test.

The SID database will automatically assign the students Entry EFL based on the assessment scores entered at the conclusion of pretesting.

## Post-Test Procedures and Guidelines

**Explain when and how to conduct post-testing, including how to ensure that the student is not post-tested before 40 contact hours, how the post-tests are administered, how the program handles invalid test forms and scores, how post-testing data is entered into SiD, and how the consortium works to maintain a 60% or greater post-testing rate for all participants within the program year.**

Students may not be retested/post-tested until they have reached 40 instructional contact hours. ABE teachers may choose to wait longer than the suggested 40 hours but should always conduct follow up testing by no more than 60 hours of instruction. The Minnesota Department of Education requires that local ABE providers maintain an annual post-test rate of no less than 60 percent. The SID database provides 2 reports which provide up-to-date post-testing information: the Level Gains with Post-Test Rates report and the Level Gains with Post-Test Rates for Distance Learning students. These reports are accessible to all ABE staff within the consortium and referred to regularly throughout the program year in assessing program and data quality.

An alternate test form within the same test series and content area is required for post-testing. Programs cannot use a reading pre-test and a math post-test to determine learner gains. As with pre-tests, all post-tests are administered under a proctored environment. Post-tests are administered using an alternate form of the prior assessment used to set their current EFL. This can become somewhat confusing, as the NRS level can change over the course of time, depending on which modality is being selected by the SID database to set the Current EFL. The SID database provides easily accessible reports, including the Assessment History report, which can highlight students and areas or modalities in need of retesting. In addition, the SID database highlights areas in need of retesting by changing the font color of the last assessment on the student summary page from red to green when it is time for a new test to be administered in that area. It is important to note that learners who have pre-tested into the highest Educational Functioning Level, ABE Level 6 do not need to be post-tested, as there is no higher EFL to which they can advance.

As with pre-tests, all post-test scores are tabulated and valid test scores (as outlined in the test administration manuals) are recorded and reported in the SID database as Standard Scores. Invalid scores require retesting in an alternate form of the test that will provide an accurate and valid score. Scores that fall below the valid range

require the student to re-test in an alternate, easier version of the test. Scores that go above the valid range require the student to re-test in an alternate, more difficult version of the test. Students continue to be re-tested after every 40 hours of instruction, using the same protocols outlined above.

## **Assessment Training Requirements and Procedures**

**Describe the assessment training requirements are for initial testing certification, re-certification at least every five years, other ongoing training, and for which staff.**

As per MDE policy, all ABE staff who administer assessments must participate in assessment training, which is offered by ABE supplemental service providers at various events throughout the program year. New teachers are given initial assessment training locally, but they are required to complete formal assessment training in both TABE and CASAS before administering assessments to students and they must submit evidence of that training to the Lead Instructor/Program Coordinator and Program Assistant for archival in SID.

Recertification is required for all staff administering tests at least once every five years. ABE staff submit evidence of this training to the Lead Instructor/Program Coordinator and Program Assistant for archival in SID following the training.

## **Additional Procedures and Guidance**

**Describe what additional guidance and procedures the ABE consortium has for local staff regarding testing and assessment.**

The Lead Instructor/Program Coordinator and the Program Assistant provide support and information for all LAEE to address concerns and questions about test administration and intake questions.